

Message Text

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SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS WITH NATO ALLIES

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1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE GOF, PROCEEDING FROM A NARROW VIEW OF THE SCOPE OF NATO CONSULTATIONS, IS ESSENTIALLY PRAGMATIC IN CONSIDERING WHICH FORUM IS BEST FOR CONSULTATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. HISTORICALLY FRANCE HAS TAKEN A STRICT CONSTRUCTION APPROACH TO NATO CONSULTATIONS, GENERALLY ARGUING THAT THESE CONSULTATIONS SHOULD BE CONFINED TO MATTERS DERIVING DIRECTLY FROM THE TREATY ITSELF OR THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA DEMARCATED THEREIN. THE FRENCH HAVE ALSO FOUND THAT ON CERTAIN SENSITIVE SUBJECTS (E.G., PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1977 LONDON SUMMIT WHICH WERE HANDLED IN WASHINGTON), CONSULTATIONS CAN BE MORE EFFICIENTLY CONDUCTED ELSEWHERE. ESSENTIALLY THE GOF, WHILE PROCEEDING FROM THE STRICT CONSTRUCTION PREMISE, IS WILLING TO BE PRAGMATIC.

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3. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THE RECENT FRG EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A CONTINUING FOUR-POWER CONSULTATION ON SALT. BY REFUSING TO PARTICIPATE, THE GOF EFFECTIVELY

SCUTTLED THE PROJECT, STATING THAT FRANCE IS SATISFIED WITH ONGOING NAC CONSULTATIONS AUGMENTED BY BILATERALS WHEN NECESSARY. THE GOF WAS NOT CONCERNED THAT THE SALT DISCUSSIONS MIGHT GO FORWARD WITHOUT THEM, ASSUMING THAT THE NAC AND BILATERALS WOULD KEEP THEM INFORMED.

4. ON QUESTIONS IN WHICH THE US IS INTENT ON ENGAGING A SOMETIMES RELUCTANT GOF (E.G., CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER RESTRAINT), WE MUST PERFORCE USE A NON-NATO SETTING FOR CONSULTATIONS.

5. THE LONDON NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS CONFERENCE GIVES ONE EXPERIENCE WHICH BEARS. AMONG NATO MEMBERS ONLY THE US, THE UK, CANADA, THE FRG, AND FRANCE WERE INVOLVED, ALONG WITH JAPAN AND THE USSR. BOTH THE DUTCH AND ITALIANS PROTESTED THEIR ABSENCE. BUT IT WAS ONLY AFTER AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON THE BASIC EXPORT GUIDELINES THAT THE FORUM COULD BE BROADENED TO INCLUDE OTHER NATO MEMBERS, NEUTRALS, AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. TO HAVE BROADENED THE PARTICIPATION EARLIER MIGHT HAVE JEOPARDIZED A DELICATE NEGOTIATION.

6. ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF CONSULTATION AT LESS THAN "15" IS THE INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP (IEPG). THIS IS COMPOSED OF THE TEN EUROGROUP MEMBERS PLUS
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FRANCE. THE IEPG PROVIDES A FORUM FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN ARMAMENTS DEVELOPMENT AND WILL SERVE AS THE EUROPEAN VOICE IN THE TRANSATLANTIC DIALOGUE.

7. THE FRENCH FIND THE REGULAR QUADRIPARTITE CONSULTATIONS UNDER THE BERLIN FRAMEWORK A VERY USEFUL FORUM, BOTH FOR EXCHANGES ON BERLIN AND ON THE OTHER SUBJECTS WHICH ARISE FROM TIME TO TIME. WITH REFERENCE TO NON-BERLIN TOPICS, THESE CAN BE DEALT WITH ON A MORE SENSITIVE BASIS THAN WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN A LARGER FORUM.

8. OUR CONTACTS IN THE GOF ARE SENSITIVE TO THE DIFFICULTIES CAUSED IN NATO BY CONSULTATIONS OUTSIDE OF NATO. YET THEY BELIEVE THAT THESE ARE ESSENTIAL AT TIMES. THE THEME UNDERLYING THEIR APPROACH IS PRAGMATISM: WHAT FORUM IS MOST EFFICIENT AND PRODUCTIVE FROM THE GOF POINT OF VIEW.
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